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Niddā, tandī Sutta

The Discourse on Drowsiness and Lethargy | S 1.16

Theme: Sleep, sleepiness and spirituality

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2018

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 SUMMARY. It is interesting to note that, at this stage, the verses of **the Devatā Saṃyutta** (the very 1st collection of connected teachings) begin to take on Dharma-based themes for the rest of the collection. The unnamed devata, apparently aware of some meditation teachings, speaks of the negative effects of the 3rd of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*).¹

1.2 ASPECTS OF THE 3RD HINDRANCE

1.2.1 The fact that the deity chooses to highlight this 3rd mental hindrance (sloth-and-torpor, *thīna, middha*) out of the 5 hindrances suggests that it particularly affects him (or her). This deity, like the others before him, is clearly from a sense-world heaven, probably Tāvātimsa.

1.2.2 “Sleepiness [drowsiness], lethargy” (*niddā tandī*) [S 30a* = S 31a*] is a common phrase, and the first 2 lines of the verse are well known and found in a number of other suttas [4]. The Buddha’s reply to the deity’s verse [S 31*] is also instructive in highlighting these aspects of sloth and torpor.

In his verse [S 30*], the deity listed the 3rd hindrance in its 5 aspects: “Sleepiness, lethargy, last yawning, | discontent, after-meal torpor.” The last 4 aspects of this set of 5 comprising the 3rd hindrance—lethargy [3.2], lazy yawning [3.3], discontent [3.4], and after-meal torpor [3.5]—are defined in **the Vibh-aṅga** [3.1.1].

2 Niddā as “sleep” and “sleepiness”

2.1 NIDDĀ AS “SLEEP”

2.1.1 Definition of sleep

2.1.1.1 The OED defines “**sleep**” as “the unconscious state or condition regularly and naturally assumed by man and animals, during the activity of the nervous system is almost or entirely suspended, and recuperation of its powers takes place.” We must assume that some of the deities and non-humans, especially the terrestrial and from the sense-base heavens do sleep, too, and should be included in this definition.

2.1.1.2 The Buddha does not speak against sleep, but only advises not to over-indulge in sleep and not to let it stand in the way of personal and spiritual cultivation. In the suttas, the Buddha, however, clearly advises us against the negative effects of **sleepiness**, especially when it weakens our attention and capacity for learning. [3.1.2]

¹ See *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1: see SD 32 for studies in the individual hindrances and related suttas.

2.1.2 Tuvataka Sutta (Sn 926) & Atta,danda Sutta (Sn 942)

2.1.2.1 *Niddā* simply means “sleep,” especially when it is accompanied by the verb *okkamati*, such as in the phrase, *niddam okkamati*, “to fall asleep.”² We see this usage in a verse from **the Tuvataka Sutta** (Sn 4.14/926) and another from **the Atta,danda Sutta** (Sn 4.15/942):

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| (1) <i>Niddam na bahulī,kareyya
jāgariyam bhajeyya ātāpī
tandim māyam hassam khiḍḍam
methunam vippajahe sa,vibhūsam</i> (Sn 926) | He would not pay much attention to sleep .
Zealous, he would resort to wakefulness.
Sloth, deception, laughter, playfulness,
coupling, he would give up, and all therewith. |
| (2) <i>Niddam tandim sahe thīnam
pamādena na samvāse
atimāne na tiṭṭheyya
nibbana,manaso nara</i> (Sn 942) | He should overcome sleep , sloth and torpor.
He would consort not with heedlessness.
He would not stand in arrogance—
a man whose mind is set on freeing itself from the
forest of craving. ³ |

2.1.2.2 *Niddā* in both Sn 926a and Sn 942a can mean either “sleep” or “sleepiness,” but properly refers to both, since Pali is renowned for its polysemy.⁴ Since both these verses are about one who is set at meditating to gain awakening, he will overcome sleepiness and have little to do with sleep.⁵

2.1.2.3 In Sn 926b, we see the opposite of *niddā*, that is, “watchfulness,” *jagariya*. The theme of **watchfulness** is highlighted in **the Jagara Sutta** (S 1.6).⁶

2.1.3 When used with the verb *upagacchati*, “to enter upon,” it has the same sense of “to go to sleep, fall asleep,” as in this passage from **the Peta,vatthu Commentary**: “(due to his wealth and generosity, he) sleeps easily and happily, and wakes up happily” (*sukham supati, sukhen’eva niddam upagacchati, sukham paṭibujjhati*, PvA 127,27-128,1).⁷

2.1.4 **The Muṭṭha,sati Sutta** (A 5.210) and **the Vinaya** (Mv 8.16.2-3) record the Buddha as teaching the 5 disadvantages of “sleeping with neither mindfulness nor clear comprehension” (*muṭṭha-s,satissa asam-pajānassa niddam okkamayato*), that is:

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| 1. He sleeps badly. | <i>dukkham supati</i> |
| 2. He wakes badly. | <i>dukkham paṭibujjhati</i> |
| 3. He has bad dreams. | <i>pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati</i> |
| 4. The deities do not protect him. | <i>devata na rakkhanti</i> |
| 5. He emits semen. | <i>asuci muccati</i> |

² V 1:15; J 3:538, 4:1; DhA 1:9; VvA 65; PvA 47.

³ On *nibbana* = *ni*, “out of” + *vana*, “the forest” (of defilements), see SD 53.7 (2.1.4.4). For comy, see Nm 423.

⁴ On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).

⁵ For other occurrences of *niddā*, see also J 1:61 (on the Bodhisattva seeing the sleeping women in the palace), 192 (**Nandi,visāla J**, J28), 2:128 (**Valāhassa J**, J 196).

⁶ S 1.6/3 (SD 54.2f). On *jāgara* and its various forms, see (2).

⁷ See also PvA 43,28, 105,25.

On the other hand, the 5 advantages of “**sleeping** with mindfulness and clear comprehension” (*upa-ṭṭhita, satissa sampājanassa niddam okkamayato*) are that he sleeps well, wakes well, has no bad dreams, the deities protect him, and he does not have a wet dream.⁸

Here, we clearly see *niddā* as meaning “sleep” in the ordinary sense of the word. It is only used in a special sense of being a **hindrance** when it has any of the other 4 characteristics. [2.3.1.1]

2.2 Fondness for sleep hinders spiritual growth

2.2.1 The (Iti) Parihāna Sutta (It 79) records the Buddha as warning that even learners (*sekha*) —that is, saints short of the arhats—are likely to face “decline” (*parihāna*), that is, not to progress, when they have a fondness for work, talk or sleep. To progress on the path, they should be mindful not to be overwhelmed with work, talk or sleep. The import here is that they should be directing their attention to inner calm and clarity to progress on the path.⁹

2.2.2 The (Pañcaka) Sekha Sutta 1 (A 5.89) reminds the learner to avoid any fondness for not only these 3 preoccupations but also the fondness for socializing and not reviewing oneself in terms of spiritual progress. Conversely, **the 5 conditions for progress** for the learner are that:

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| 1. he should not be fond of work; | <i>na kamm'ārāmatā</i> |
| 2. he should not be fond of talk; | <i>na bhass'ārāmatā</i> |
| 3. he should not be fond of sleep ; | <i>na niddārāmatā</i> |
| 4. he should not be fond of socializing; and | <i>na saṅgaṇik'ārāmatā</i> |
| 5. he should review oneself in terms of spiritual progress. | <i>yathā, vimuttam cittaṃ paccavekkhati</i> |
- (A 5.89/3:116,6 f)

2.2.3 In the Sāmaka Sutta (A 6.21), the first 3 kinds of fondness are mentioned by a deity to the Buddha as leading to a monk’s decline. The Buddha agrees, and later, when instructing the monks, the Buddha adds 3 more qualities that lead to decline, giving these **6 conditions for decline**, that is:

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| 1. fondness for work; | <i>kamm'ārāmatā</i> |
| 2. fondness for talk; | <i>bhass'ārāmatā</i> |
| 3. fondness for sleep ; | <i>niddārāmatā</i> |
| 4. fondness for socializing; | <i>saṅgaṇik'ārāmatā</i> |
| 5. being difficult to correct; and | <i>dovacassatā</i> |
| 6. bad friendship. | <i>papa, mittatā</i> |
- (A 6.21/3:309 f)

2.2.4 The Bhaddaka Sutta (A 6.14) records a teaching by the Buddha where *niddā*, meaning “sleep” or “sleepiness” is listed as one of the unwholesome conditions that does not bring us a “good death” (*bhaddaka maraṇa*), that is, these conditions bring us to a subhuman realm (*apāya*), that is, those of the asuras, animals, pretas and hell-beings.¹⁰ The following 10 conditions are conducive for a monk (a practitioner) to have a “good death,” that is, a happy rebirth, that is:

⁸ A 5.210/3:251 (SD 103.12) = Mv 8.16.2-3 (V 1:294,14-25).

⁹ It 79/3.3.10/71 f.

¹⁰ See SD 2.20 (Diagram 2.2).

(1) one is not fond of work;	<i>na kamm'ārāmo hoti</i>	
(2) one is not fond of talking;	<i>na bhass'ārāmo</i>	
(3) one is not fond of sleep ;	<i>na niddārāmo</i>	
(4) one is not fond of socializing;	<i>na saṅgaṇik'ārāmo</i>	
(5) one is not fond of intimacy; and	<i>na saṃsagg'ārāmo¹¹</i>	
(6) one delights not in mental proliferation.	<i>na papañc'ārāmo¹²</i>	(A 6.14/3:293 f), SD 111.4

2.2.5 The (Sattaka) Sekha Sutta (A 7.28) gives a further list of 7 conditions for the decline of a learner (a saint short of being an arhat), in addition to the same 4 conditions mentioned in **the Sāmaka Sutta** (A 6.21) [above]. **The 7 conditions for the decline of a learner** are:

1. fondness for work;	<i>kamm'ārāmatā</i>	
2. fondness for talk;	<i>bhass'ārāmatā</i>	
3. fondness for <u>sleep</u> ;	<i>niddārāmatā</i>	
4. fondness for socializing;	<i>saṅgaṇik'ārāmatā</i>	
5. not guarding the sense-doors;	<i>indriyesu agutta,dvāratā</i>	
6. lack of moderation in food;	<i>bhojane amattaññutā</i>	
7. undertaking sangha matters that are better dealt with by senior elders	<i>na iti paṭisañcikkhati: santi kho pana saṅghe there rattaññū cira,pabbajitā bhāra,vāhino, te tena paññāyissantīti, attano te yogam āpajjati</i>	(A 7.26/4:24 f)

2.2.6 The (Dasaka) Aññā Sutta (A 10.86) records Mahā Kassapa as instructing the monks on how a learned monk may, through arrogance, declare that he has attained final knowledge (*aññā*), that is, arhathood. However, the Buddha or his disciple with the power of mind-reading will know that such a monk's claim is false since that claimant is still worldly in any of these 10 ways:

1. he is covetous;	<i>abhijjālu</i>	} <u>The 5 mental hindrances</u> (<i>pañca nīvaraṇa</i>) preventing the attaining of dhyana
2. he has ill will;	<i>vyāpāda</i>	
3. he has sloth and torpor;	<i>thīna,middha</i>	
4. he is restless;	<i>uddhata</i>	
5. he is doubt-ridden;	<i>vicikicchā</i>	
6. he is fond of work;	<i>kamm'ārāma</i>	
7. he is fond of talking;	<i>bhass'ārāma</i>	
8. he is fond of sleeping ;	<i>niddārāma</i>	
9. he is fond of socializing; and	<i>saṅgaṇik'ārāma</i>	
10. he is unmindful [forgetful].	<i>muttha-s,sati</i>	(A 10.86,2.16/5:164 f), SD 12.15

¹¹ This refers to something beyond socializing (*saṅgaṇika*), to bonding and beyond, ie, developing intimacy with others, by way of listening (eg, phoning), seeing (meeting), conversing, eating or living together (bodily intimacy) (*savana,dassana,samullāpa,sambhoga,kāya,samsagga,vasena*, SnA 348,18 f; Nm 139 f; qu at SnA 28,3; Nc 137). Clearly this refers to celibate renunciants, those on spiritual retreat and those observing the celibacy precepts.

¹² *Papañca* here refers to a mental proliferation of defilements through craving, views and conceit (*taṇhā, diṭṭhi, māna*) that induce mental intoxication (unmindfulness and obsession) (AA 3:348,20 f). *Papañca* includes conception, perception and ideation (ie thinking, seeking and fabricating distractions) due to craving, views and conceit.

2.3 NIDDĀ AS “SLEEPINESS”

2.3.1 *Niddā* in compounds

2.3.1.1 *Niddā* as used in the **Niddā, tandī Sutta** (S 1.16), in its verses [S 30+31] generally means “sleepiness” in the sense of having 4 characteristics (as listed in S 30 and 31. “Sleepiness” is listed as the 1st of the set of 5 qualities as a “headword” that in itself simply refers to ordinary sleepiness, but when characterized by any of the other 4 aspects should be regarded as being negative and is to be avoided by the practitioner.

2.3.1.2 In the **Rohitassa Sutta** (S 2.26) and the **Rohitassa Sutta 1+2** (A 4.45 = 4.46), the ascetic tells the Buddha how, using his psychic power, he traversed the universe to find the world’s end but failed:

Although possessing such speed and such a stride, and having a lifespan of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, travelling for a hundred years, pausing only to eat, drink, to take meals and snacks, to void and pee, to dispel **sleepiness** and tiredness (*niddā, kilamatha, paṭivinodanā*)—I died along the way without reaching the world’s end.¹³

2.3.1.3 The **Parābhava Sutta** (Sn 1.6) contains the phrase *nidda, sīla*, “of drowsy habits, slothful, sleepy” (Sn 96), thus:

<p><i>niddā, sīlī sabhā, sīlī anuṭṭhātā ca yo naro alaso kodha, paññāṇo taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ</i></p>	<p>(Sn 96)</p>	<p>When a man is fond of <u>sleep</u>, fond of society, and exerts not himself; lazy, disposed to anger— this is the cause of the failure.</p>
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Niddā here as above [2.2] has both the senses of “sleep” (or rather, over-sleeping) and “sleepiness.” The idea is *not* that sleep in itself is bad, but rather in the context of a spiritually inert and negative person, over-sleeping and sleepiness are clear signs of failure.

2.3.2 The Commentary of the **Niddā, tandī Sutta** (S 1.16) terms of *niddā* as referring to the sloth-and-torpor that have arisen, motivated in the unwholesome mind of worldlings and learners by such previous or other indeterminate drowsiness.¹⁴ It quotes the **Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), where the Buddha says: “I recall, Aggivessana, in the last month of the hot season, ... I fell asleep (mindful and fully comprehending) ...” (*abhijānām’aham aggivessana gimhānam pacchime māse ... (sato sampajāno) niddam okkamitāti*, M 36,46).¹⁵

However, here, in the Mahā Saccaka, it is clear that *niddā* simply means “sleep,” that is, its verb is *okkamati*, “to descend (into sleep).” But in the **Niddā, tandī Sutta** (S 1.16), as we have noted, it has a negative connotation of “sleepiness, slothfulness.”

¹³ S 2.26,7/1:62 (SD 7.2) = A 4.45,7/2:48 = 4.46,7/2:50 (SD 52.8). This is elaborated as a parable in (**Lok’āyatika**) **Brāhmaṇā S** (A 9.38,4/4:428), SD 35.2.

¹⁴ *Eva, rūpāya avyākata, niddāya pubba, bhāgā, para, bhāgesu sekha, puthujjanānam sasaṅkhārika, akusale citte uppannam thina, middham.*

¹⁵ M 36,46/1:249,33-36 (SD 49.4). The Pali quoted in DA 2:529,1-4 = SA 1:35,19 f = AA 4:22 f.

2.4 GOOD SLEEP

2.4.1 Well-deserved sleep

2.4.1.1 The Suppati Sutta (S 4.7) records how once when the Buddha is mindfully sleeping, Māra appears to him, trying to make the Buddha feel guilty over his well-deserved short rest.

[Māra:]

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| <p>4 <i>Kiṃ soppasi kiṃ su soppasi</i>
 <i>Kim idaṃ soppasi dubbhago viya</i>
 <i>suññ'āgāran ti soppasi</i>
 <i>kim idaṃ soppasi sūriy'uggate</i>¹⁶ 'ti</p> | <p>(Sn 459)</p> | <p>What, you sleep? Why do you sleep?
 What's this, you sleep like a wretch?
 Thinking, "Empty abode," you sleep.
 What's this, you sleep when the sun is up!</p> |
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[Buddha:]

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| <p>5 <i>Yassa jālinī visattikā</i>
 <i>taṇhā n'atthi kuhiñci netave</i>
 <i>sabbûpadhīnaṃ parikkhāya buddho</i>
 <i>soppati kin tav'ettha mārā ti</i></p> | <p>(Sn 460)</p> | <p>For whom there is no entangling net-trap
 of craving to take him anywhere,
 with the destruction of all birth-bases,¹⁷ awake:
 he sleeps—what about you here, Māra?</p> |
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(S 4.7/459-460/1:107), SD 32.13

2.4.1.2 According to the commentarial tradition, the Buddha sleeps for only 2 hours during the last watch of the night (2.00-6.00 am). It should be noted, however, that he sometimes rests briefly after the noon meal, especially when the day is warm. The Buddha does not need so much sleep because he goes into deep dhyana daily: at dawn and at dusk.¹⁸

2.4.1.3 The Hatthaka Āḷavaka Sutta (A 3.34) records the meeting between prince Hatthaka Āḷavaka and the Buddha, sitting in meditation on a spread of leaves beside a cattle-track in a simsapa forest in windy cold weather, wearing only his monastic robes. Noticing all this, Hatthaka asks the Buddha how he is able to sleep in such conditions.

The Buddha replies: "Yes, my prince, I slept well [happily and comfortably] (*sukhaṃ asayitthaṃ*). Indeed, I am one of those who sleep well in the world." The Buddha goes on to explain that his good sleep is the result of his lack of worldliness, unlike Hatthaka who, despite his palatial life, has to deal with various worldly affairs and situations which often troubles his sleep. Hatthaka agrees.¹⁹

2.4.2 The 11 benefits of lovingkindness

2.4.2.1 The (Ekā,dasa) Mettānisamsā Sutta (A 11.16), in its list of the 11 benefits of cultivating lovingkindness, starts by first mentioning that "one sleeps happily." The 11 benefits of cultivating lovingkindness are as follows:

¹⁶ So Ee; Be Ce Se *sūriye uggate*; Ce *suriye uggate*.

¹⁷ See SD 28.11 (3.2).

¹⁸ SD 36.2 (5.6.1).

¹⁹ A 3.34/1:136-138 (SD 4.8).

- (1) One sleeps happily.²⁰
- (2) One wakes happily.²¹
- (3) One sees no bad dreams.²²
- (4) One is dear to humans.²³
- (5) One is dear to non-humans.²⁴
- (6) One is protected by devas.²⁵
- (7) Fire, poison and weapons cannot harm one.²⁶
- (8) One's mind easily concentrates.²⁷
- (9) One's countenance is serene.²⁸
- (10) One dies unconfused.²⁹
- (11) And, if one penetrates no higher state, one goes to the brahma world.³⁰ (A 11.16/5:342, SD 2.15)

2.4.2.2 The full effect of lovingkindness is felt when we reach dhyana cultivating it. However, even a simple mindful radiating lovingkindness to oneself and those significant others, especially on a regular basis, helps ward off negative thoughts and feelings. This helps us have good sleep so that our day is well lived and we would naturally keep to the precepts and are easily inspired by good things, such as studying the suttas and understanding it. We also find that we get along with people more positively and even inspire them with our lovingkindness.

2.4.3 Sleeping postures

2.4.3.1 The Seyyā Sutta (A 4.244) lists the following 4 modes of reclining (*seyyā*) giving us some idea why each is so called, thus:

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| (1) the corpse posture (<i>peta,seyyā</i>), | a corpse mostly (<i>yebhuyyena</i>) lies on its back; |
| (2) the sensualist posture (<i>kāma.bhogī,seyyā</i>), | a sensual person mostly lies on his left; |
| (3) the lion posture (<i>sīha,seyyā</i>), | a lion lies on its right; |
| (4) the tathagata posture (<i>tathagata,seyyā</i>) | lying down lion-like in dhyana. |
- A 4.244/2:244 f (SD 76.6)

²⁰ Instead of turning over and snoring, one falls asleep like entering a state of meditation attainment.

²¹ Instead of waking up in discomfort, groaning and yawning, one wakes up without contortions, like a lotus opening. (This benefit is omitted in A:ÑB.)

²² One has auspicious dreams, such as worshipping at a shrine, making an offering, listening to a Dharma talk, etc.

²³ One is popular with others and in society.

²⁴ One will not be harmed by negative energies around one or fall sick due to inexplicable causes.

²⁵ One will be guarded by divine beings like parents guarding a child.

²⁶ One will create a positive aura or environment around oneself that would not arouse negative emotions or reactions in others. On how lovingkindness protects a lay woman disciple from being harmed by hot boiling oil, see DhA 17.3/3:308-313 = SD 3.8(II).

²⁷ One's mind easily concentrates due to lack of negative thoughts that drain one's energies.

²⁸ "Like a palmyra fruit loosened from its stem" (Vism 9.74), ie one's countenance is relaxed, soothing, delightful.

²⁹ One passes away peacefully as if falling asleep or one does so mindfully and happily.

³⁰ If one is unable to attain arhathood, then after death one arises in the Brahmā world (dhyanic existence) as if waking up from sleep.

2.4.3.2 The Neyy'attha Nīt'attha Sutta (A 2.3.5+6) speaks of sutta teachings as those

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| (1) whose sense “is drawn out” (<i>nīt'attha</i>), | that is, explicit or direct teachings; and |
| (2) whose sense “needs to be drawn out” (<i>neyy'attha</i>), | that is, implicit or indirect teachings. |
- A 2.3.5+6 (SD 2.6b)

Basically, (1) a teaching whose sense has been drawn out uses “Dharma” language, that is, special words (but not necessarily in a fixed technical sense) pointing directly to the Dharma, such as moral virtue, concentration, aggregates, wisdom, awakening and so on.

(2) A teaching whose sense is to be drawn out uses the conventional language of common words, figures, stories and worldly references. Since the Dharma is meant to help the unawakened, there are more of such implicit teachings. **The Seyyā Sutta** (A 4.244) is an example of one whose teaching “needs to be drawn out” (*neyy'attha*).

2.4.3.3 We must be mindful not to project our biases onto this set of teachings, but investigate the Dharma it is presenting to us. Notice that in (1) and (2), there is the qualifier “mostly” (*yebhuyyena*); it is not a generalization. Amongst these teachings we may discover training in moral virtue, mental cultivation, wisdom or freedom. When we feel uncomfortable about a certain teaching, it is a powerful indicator that we can learn something self-liberating from it. We need to investigate why we reacted as such and what we can discover about this.

(1) We should not jump to the conclusion that just because we *sometimes* sleep **supine** (lying on our back) means that we are a “**corpse**”! We are more likely to look indecent or indecorous when sleeping supine, when we may lie with legs apart, and so on. However, we should look more decent when we are properly covered with, say, a blanket. The idea is to prevent arousing any unwholesome thoughts in ourself and in others who may chance to see us sleeping.

The supine sleeping posture may induce our stomach contents to flow back up into the mouth. However, using a suitably high pillow usually helps. When we sleep supine, the back of our tongue may fall back, blocking the airway, causing us to snore. This posture is also not good for those with sleep apnoea.

(2) It is not that when we **lie on our left** that we are sensual, but rather that sensual people tend to resort to lying on the left, as observed in India during the Buddha’s time. Many of us may alternate between sleeping on the right, supine and on the left. After all, we are still unawakened and our sleeping habits may reflect that. This is a reminder that we need to progress on the spiritual path.

The professionals tell us that sleeping on the left can put a strain on internal organs like the liver, lungs and stomach. This sense of discomfort may cause us to yearn for some comfort. This posture is recommended for pregnant mothers since it promotes bloodflow which will benefit the baby or babies;³¹ but this is a special case.

(3) A lion, as a rule, sleeps majestically **on his right**, “lion-like.” Through evolution, such animals must have learned that this is a more comfortable posture for resting. It reduces snoring and elongates

³¹ Medical professionals tell us that pregnant women, esp those entering their 6th month, should avoid sleeping on their backs as this may cause the heavy uterus to press on major blood vessels and impede blood circulation. A major blood vessel which could be affected is the inferior vena cava, which lies to the right of the body and returns blood to the heart. The heart may be unable to pump effectively, which may lead to a drop in blood pressure.

the spine.³² For monastics, this is a “decent” posture since it gives us a kind of “covered” look should others chance to see us sleeping.

A variation of this is called “the foetus” posture, which seems to be the most common sleeping posture, according to modern surveys. Apparently, women tend to adopt this sleeping posture than men. Psychologically, it is a kind of “safe” posture, since we are curled up like a foetus in a womb. Once again, we should remember that our sleeping posture should be natural and comfortable. If we notice any negative personal traits, we should work on them, rather than resign ourselves to what our habitual sleeping posture seem to say about us.

(4) **The tathagata or buddha posture** is the lion posture that the Buddha assumes when he goes into dhyanic sleep. Tradition has it that during the 1st part of the last watch (2.00-3.00 am), the Buddha would mindfully walk back and forth to dispel the discomfort of having sat teaching earlier on. During the second part (3.00-5.00 am), he rests “on his right side in the lion-posture, with one leg resting on the other, mindful and fully aware, after mentally noting the time for rising.”³³ During the close of the last watch (5.00-6.00 am), the Buddha sits in meditation, that is, “the attainment of great compassion,” surveying to see who is ready for the teaching and whom he should approach.³⁴

Interestingly, the prone (lying on the stomach) position is not even mentioned. This is the worst posture for sleeping because it is difficult to keep the spine in a neutral position. Stomach sleeping puts pressure on joints and muscles, bringing on pain, tingling and numbness. Anyway, most people do not sleep in only one posture throughout, but occasionally change it.³⁵

3 DEFINITIONS OF LINES ab OF S 30 +31

3.1 THE SET

3.1.1 The items as a set (the Vibhaṅga)

3.1.1.1 The last 4 of the 5 aspects of the 3rd mental hindrance—“lethargy, lazy yawning, discontent, after-meal torpor” (with the omission of “sleepiness”)—are defined in **the Vibhaṅga, chapter 17** (on the analysis of small items, *khuddaka, vatthu vibhaṅga*). These 5 aspects are said to be “single items” (*ekaka*).

3.1.1.2 Clearly, for this reason, too, the verse (S 30c*) uses the clause “**because of this**” (*etena*) to address the 5 items—any of them can *singly* hinder us from progressing in our meditation. “Sleepiness”

³² Even when sleeping on the right, the body should be symmetrical or balanced. Crossing the left upper leg over the right lower one, for instance, is not encouraged as it would cause the left upper knee to drop and the left hip to be rolled forward. This twists the lower spine and may lead to lower-back ache. Instead, keep the legs bent at the knee, one on top of the other, so that the lower leg can support the upper leg. It may help to put a pillow in between the bent knees for greater support; or to hug a bolster to support the upper arm and leg. Those with large hips may also find that when they lie on their sides, there is a space between the waist and the bed. This may cause the upper body to sag downwards and strain the lower back. To prevent this, put a rolled towel into the space (bottom). Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore: [download PDF](#).

³³ **Suppati S** (S 4.7,2/1:107), SD 32.13. “After mentally noting the time for rising,” *uṭṭhāna, saññaṃ manasi karitvā*, at **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,4.14/2:135, 16,1/2:137), SD 9 (§§4.40, 5.1); also **D 33/3:209**; **M 39**,10/1:274, **53**,5 +10/1:354 f; **S 4.7/1:107**, **4.12/14:110** f (Buddha resting), **35.120/4:105**, **35.239/4:177**, **35.243/4:184**; **A 3.16/1:114**, **4.23/2:40**, **4.58.9/4:87**, **8.9.4/4:168**, **10.67.1/5:123**, **10.68.1/5:126**; **U 8.5/84**. On “sleeping mindfully,” see **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8(7)/1:57).

³⁴ See SD 32.13 (1.1.7.3).

³⁵ For a modern survey, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3112170.stm>.

or “drowsiness” is not mentioned because these 4 comprise it: “**sleepiness**” (a broad term) is characterized by “lethargy, lazy yawning, discontent, after-meal torpor.”

3.1.2 The Nīvaraṇa Pahāna Vagga. The list—*niddā tandī vijambhitā aratī bhatta,sammado* [S 30ab*]—or parts thereof recur elsewhere. This stock appears in the **Nīvaraṇa Pahāna Vagga** (A 1.2), thus:

Bhikshus, no other single thing do I see, on account of which unarisen sloth-and-torpor³⁶ arises, and arisen sloth-and-torpor comes to grow in abundance, as on account of this, bhikshus, namely, discontent, apathy, fidgeting, indolence, after-meal drowsiness, and mental sluggishness.³⁷

Bhikshus, on account of mental sluggishness, unarisen **discontent, drowsiness, lazy yawning, after-meal torpor, mental sluggishness** comes to grow in abundance.

(A 1.2.3 = A 1.13/1:3,19), SD 16.3

In this Sutta—and the prose versions in the suttas, generally [3.1.3]—this stock phrase read as *aratī tandī vijambhitā bhatta,sammado cetaso ca līnattam̃*. The items are differently arranged and with the additional phrase, “mental sluggishness,” *cetaso ca līnattam̃*.

3.1.3 The (Bojjhaṅga) Kāya Sutta (S 46.2). A near-parallel to the **S 30ab** stock-phrase appears in the section on sloth-and-torpor in the **(Bojjhaṅga) Kāya Sutta** (S 46.2), thus:

And what, bhikshus, is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth-and-torpor and for the growth and abundance of arisen sloth-and-torpor?

There are, bhikshu, **discontent, drowsiness, lazy yawning, after-meal torpor, mental sluggishness** (*aratī tandī,vijambhitā bhatta,sammado cetaso ca līnattam̃*).³⁸

Frequently giving unwise attention to them is food for the arising of unarisen sloth and torpor, and for the growth and abundance of arisen sloth and torpor.

S 46.2 (SD 62.9)³⁹ = S 46.51,5 (SD 7.15)⁴⁰

This passage is quoted in numerous commentaries, and the key terms explained in some of them.⁴¹ The phrase *aratī,(tandī)vijambhikā-* occurs in the Visuddhi,magga.⁴²

3.2 LETHARGY (*tandī*)

3.2.1 The Saṃyutta Commentary defines **tandī** as indolence that invades us in times of extreme hunger, extreme cold, and so on.⁴³ Hence, it is said (in the Vibhaṅga Commentary):

Therein what is “lethargy”? It is apathy, being apathetic, mental lethargy, idleness, being idle, state of being idle. This is called lethargy.⁴⁴ [3.3.2]

³⁶ *Thīna,middha*.

³⁷ *Aratī,tandī,vijambhikā bhatta,sammado cetaso ca līna,cittam̃*. AA 1:33,27 qu Vbh 352,3.

³⁸ This stock passage recurs in **Niddā Tandī S** (S 1.16/1:7), SD 54.3f, and is explained at Vbh 352 [1.3.1 etc]. On methods of overcoming this hindrance, see S 46.2,17n (SD 7.15).

³⁹ S 46.2/5:64,31-32 (SD 62.9).

⁴⁰ S 46.51,5/5:103,13-14 (SD 7.15).

⁴¹ Quoted by DA 3:780,9 = MA 1:283,29 = VbhA 272,19) ≈ Vbh 345,19 (352,5'; VbhA 478,24); Nm 412,10, 492,11.

⁴² Vism 1.94/33,23, 14.167/469,23.

⁴³ **Tandī**'ti *ati-c,chātâtī,sītâdi,kālesu uppannam̃ āgantukam̃ ālasiyam̃*. (SA 1:35,23-26)

3.3.2 Note the Abhidhamma style of registering a series of synonyms for *niddā*. This style is the basis of what we today call a “thesaurus” of words, a register of synonyms, near-synonyms and related words. This is also a style predominant in the Niddesa, the canonical commentaries on the oldest parts of the Sutta Nipāta.⁴⁵

3.3 LAZY YAWNING (*vijambhitā*)

3.3.1 Manuscripts and variant readings. There are 2 Pali spellings for “lazy yawning” in S 1.16: *vijambhitā* (Burmese edition) and *vijambhikā* (European/PTS and Sinhalese editions). The Siamese variant *vijimhitā* is probably a wrong reading. Both readings fit the context here.

The reason for such variants is because the suttas were preserved in various traditions, especially the Sinhalese (Ce, from “Ceylonese edition”), the Burmese (Be), the Thai (Se, from “Siamese edition”), the Khmer (Cambodian edition) and the Pali Text Society (UK) edition. Then, for each of the Theravada countries (Sri Lanka, Myanmar or Thailand) there are different local manuscripts handed down from past centuries. The older these manuscripts (usually on palm-leaves), the more valuable they are likely to be.

These variations sometimes arise from where the manuscript was written or copied, but sometimes the variants arose through the copyists’ preference or errors. However, from comparing a few manuscripts, an expert or trained scholar will be able to decide which reading of the variants he thinks is the best.

3.3.2 *Vijambhitā* as “yawning”

3.3.2.1 Here, we shall examine the 1st of 2 senses of *vijambhitā*; then, we will look at the 2nd meaning [3.3.3]. The usual Pali word for “yawning” is *vijambhikā* (PED), but more commonly we find the reading *vijambhitā* in the Pali manuscripts. We have to decide, depending on the context, whether to translate it as “yawning” [3.3.2.2] or as “fidgeting,” and so on [3.3.3].

Both *vijambhitā* (Be) and *vijambhikā* (Ce, Ee) are the present tense forms of *vijambhati*, “to yawn (before rising)”; hence, it connotes drowsiness, laziness, and so on. It is found in the stock phrase: *niddā tandī vijambhitā* [S 30a*] and *niddarṃ tandirṃ vijambhitarṃ* [S 31a*], that is, “sleepiness, lethargy, lazy yawning.” These phrases refer to the effects of the hindrance of sloth-and-torpor, which prevents us from cultivating our mind and attaining wholesome states.

3.3.2.2 A related but longer and better known stock phrase is: *aratī, tandī, vijambhikā bhatta, sammado cetaso ca līna, cittarṃ*, “discontent, lethargy [apathy], lazy yawning, after-meal torpor and mental sluggishness.” This is found in at least two texts, that is the **Nīvaraṇa Pahāna Vagga** of the Aṅguttara (A 1.2.3)⁴⁶ and the **(Bojjhaṅga) Kāya Sutta** (S 46.2).⁴⁷ The context is the same: that of the mental hindrance of sloth-and-torpor.

⁴⁴ *Vuttam pi c’etaṃ: “Tattha katamā tandī? Yā tandī tandiyanā tandimanatā ālasyarṃ ālasyāyanā ālasyāyitattarṃ, ayarṃ vuccati tandī’ti* (VbhA 352,7-9).

⁴⁵ The Niddesa or **Sutta Niddesa** comprises: **Mahā, niddesa** (Nm or Niddesa 1), comy on Aṭṭhaka, vagga (Sn 766-975); & **Cūḷa, niddesa** (Nc or Niddesa 2), comy on Pārāyaṇa, vagga (Sn 976-1149) + Khagga, visāṇa S (Sn 35-75).

⁴⁶ A 1.2.3/1:3,19 f (SD 16.3). AA 1:33,27 qu Vbh 352,3; Vism 33. See (3.1.2).

⁴⁷ S 46.2/5:64 (SD 62.9).

3.3.3 *Vijambhitā* as “fidgeting”

3.3.3.1 We have already noted that *vijambhitā* (Be) or *vijambhikā* (Ce Ee) come from *vijambhati*, which can mean either (1) “yawning” or bodily arousal (such as when waking up) or (2) “fidgeting” or “moving, bending and stretching of the body” [3.3.2.1].⁴⁸

The Saṃyutta Commentary explains it as: “The arousing, acute arousing of the body, and so on, following the Abhidhamma method” (*tattha katamā vijambhitā? Yā kāyassa jambhanā vijambhanā’ti, ādinā nayena abhidhamme āgato’va*, SA 1:35 f). [3.3.3.2]

The Abhidhamma definition is given in the **Vibhaṅga Commentary** as follows: “The body’s restlessness, fidgeting, bending forward, bending backward, twisting, stretching, shaking—this is called *vijambhikā*.”⁴⁹

3.3.3.2 A rare usage of *vijambhitā* in the sense of “grace of gait” is found in the **Eka,paññā Jātaka** (J 149).⁵⁰ The story goes that Brahmaddatta, the kind of Benares, is impressed watching the Bodhisattva—then, an ascetic living the Himalayas—approaching “in a lion-like grace of gait” (*sīha, vijambhitena āgacchati*). The narrator describes it as follows:

“Looking down from the palace window, the king was impressed at his gait. He thought: ‘This ascetic, peaceful in faculty, peaceful in mind, looking before him only a plough’s length, as if at every step he places a purse of a thousand pieces, approaches with a lion’s grace of gait. If there were that one true goodness, it must be in this one!’⁵¹ The king goes to meet the ascetic and invites him into his palace.”

3.4 DISCONTENT (*arati*). The **Saṃyutta Commentary** explains *arati* as “losing heart through bias for the unwholesome” (*arati’ti akusala, pakkhā ukkaṇṭhitatā*, SA 1:35,27). The **Vibhaṅga Commentary**, following the Abhidhamma method of giving a registry of synonyms, explains *arati* as:

“Tedium, showing tedium, displeasure, being displeased, losing heart, feeling dread towards remote abodes or one or other of the wholesome states (especially the dhyanas). This is called *arati*.” (VbhA 352,3-6).⁵²

3.5 AFTER-MEAL TORPOR (*bhatta, sammada*)

3.5.1 *Bhatta, sammada* refers to “the time when the mind is distressed on account of being attached to food, (or) faintness on account of (too much) food, (or) exhaustion on account of (too much) food, and so on” (*bhatta, sammado’ti bhatta, mucchā bhatta, kilamatho, citta, daratha, nissit’ādi, kale pana tesam*, SA 1:35,28 f). This is a common problem especially for monastics who take only one meal a day, taken between dawn and noon. As the body digests the food, he is likely to feel groggy, and may not feel like meditating. But this is only a misperception.

⁴⁸ “Stretching and bending of the body; fidgeting”: *kaya, vijambhanā* (SA 35,27); “bending about of the body; fidgeting”: *kaya, vināmanā* (VbhA 272).

⁴⁹ *Yā kāyassa jambhanā vijambhanā ānamanā vinamanā sannamanā paṇamanā vyādhiyakaṃ--ayaṃ vuccati vijambhikā*. (VbhA 352,11-13)

⁵⁰ PED: *vijambhikā* wrongly explains that the word is used here “sarcastically.”

⁵¹ *Rājā sīha, pañjarena olokento taṃ disvā iriyā, pathe pasīditvā “ayaṃ tāpaso sant’indriyi sant, manaso yuga, mat-ta, daso pada, vare pada. vāre sahassa-t, thavikaṃ ṭhapento viya sīha, jambhitena āgacchati. Sace santa, dhammo nāma’eko atthi imassa ten’abbhantarena bhavitabban’ti* (J 149/1:506,1-5).

⁵² *Pantesu vā senāsanesu aññatar’aññataresu vā adhikusalesu dhammesu vā arati aratikā anabharati anabhira-maṇā ukkaṇṭhitā paritassitā--ayaṃ vuccati arati*. (VbhA 359,4-6).

3.5.2 As meditators, we well know that we are more likely to fall asleep when we meditate immediately after a meal. Hence, we would usually do some walking meditation, and then sit down to continue meditating. When this is done right, we get into a focused state that transcends the body (which takes care of itself, as it were).

Even when we do fall asleep during such a session, we would get a deep rest. Upon emerging from such a respite, we should continue with the meditation. All this should be done in a natural flow of mindfulness. There are occasions, such as when we are not feeling well, we should then rest mindfully after a meal or whenever we need to. Such proper rest prepares us for a better meditation in due course.

4 The deity's verse

4.1 The Niddāṅṅandī Sutta (S 1.16) us a short discourse of 2 verses, the first spoken by a deity. This deity represents the titled, the wealthy and the powerful throughout history who think that on account of their title, wealth and power, they are entitled to define Buddhism. In doing so, they not only spread the wrong teachings, but also hinder and destroy the Buddha Dhamma, as evident in the countries and communities where such "deities" predominate or have any influence.

The deity's verse is wrong on a number of counts:

4.2 "Sleepiness, etc" are only part of the mental hindrance of sloth-and-torpor (*thīna, middha*), which is only one of the 5 hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*).⁵³ Even when we overcome all the hindrances, we can only attain dhyana. We need to overcome all the 10 mental fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*)⁵⁴ in order to complete the path to become an arhat.

4.3 "The noble path appears not here amongst beings" not because of "sleepiness, etc." In the **Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58), the Buddha declares:

<p>"The Tathagata, bhikshus, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, is one who <u>gives rise</u> to the unarisen path, who <u>causes the unborn</u> path to be born, who <u>shows</u> the path yet to be shown."⁵⁵</p>	<p><i>anuppannassa maggassa uppādetā asañjātassa maggassa sañjānetā anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā</i></p>
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In other words, it is because the Buddha teaches the Dharma that there is the noble path "here amongst beings."

5 The Buddha's verse

5.1 S 31 cd

5.1.1 In response to the deity's verse (S 30*), the Buddha retains the first 2 lines because they are correct in terms of the mental training aspect, more specifically regarding **diligence** (*appamāda*) in whole-

⁵³ On the 5 hindrances are (1) sensual pleasure, (2) ill will, (3) restlessness and worry, (4) sloth and torpor, and (5) doubt: **Nīvaraṇa** SD 32.1; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12.

⁵⁴ On the 10 fetters, see (1) self-identity view, (2) spiritual doubt, (3) attachment to ritual and vows, (4) sensual lust, (5) aversion, (6) lust for form existence, (7) lust for formless existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, and (10) ignorance: SD 10.16 (1.6.6-8); **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1.4); (**Sekha**) **Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3 (2).

⁵⁵ S 22.58,11/3:66 (SD 49.10).

some states is “the one thing that is of great help.”⁵⁶ And also because the Buddha wants to maintain a spiritual connection with the deity, so that he or she hears the last 2 lines of **S 31**, that is, “**having dispelled this by effort (virīya), | the noble path is purified**” [S 31cd]. We can take *virīya* here as a synonym for *appamāda*.

5.1.2 The practice

5.1.2.1 “The noble path (*ariya,magga*)” is, of course, the eightfold path, which, however, is not attained but only “**purified**” (*visujjhati*, present expressed completed action).⁵⁷ This refers to a stage of spiritual purification, which we should simply take to refer to the **3 trainings**. What is said in **S 31ab**—“sleepiness, etc”—all deal with the body, that is, mindfulness of the body, which is part of the 1st training—that of moral virtue.

With the purification of moral virtue (*sīla,visuddhi*), it becomes the basis for mental cultivation (*citta,-visuddhi*). There is nothing technical here, but they are simply synonymous with training in moral virtue (*sīla,sikkhā*) and in mental concentration (*samādhi, sikkhā*). Both of these then become the bases for insight wisdom, that is, the training in wisdom (*paññā,sikkhā*).⁵⁸

5.1.2.2 All this is our “basic” training as practising Buddhists, that is, keeping to the precepts, meditating and studying the suttas. **Keeping the precepts** helps us to effectively cut down bad karma, especially the guilt of immorality that can hinder mental calm and clarity. **Meditation** cultivates these inner calm and clarity, supported by mindfulness and reflection.

5.1.2.3 Mindfulness here refers to being aware of the conditions and changes our mind goes through; **reflection** is the direction our attention into the nature of what is right before us: this may be some beautiful teaching we have learned from the suttas or some truth (such as impermanence) we see in ourself or outside in others or in nature.

All this is still *mundane*, in the sense that we do not even attain streamwinning yet. Such a practice helps us develop **moral courage** (*vesārajja*),⁵⁹ so that we build sufficient faith or wisdom (depending on our character) to understand, in theory, what streamwinning is about.⁶⁰ The purpose of this mundane stage, then, is that of our aspiring to streamwinning.⁶¹

5.2 VIRIYA. The Commentary says that the noble path (*ariya,magga*) is both the mundane and supramundane. (While the “mundane path,” *lokiya,magga*, may be here understood as our practice of the 3 trainings as a worldling, the supramundane path begins with streamwinning.) The path arises when we have overcome all mental defilements by means of the path itself, with the energy (*virīya*) connascent with the path. (SA 1:36,7 f).

⁵⁶ “Diligence in wholesome states is the one state of great help” (*bahu,kāra*) (D 34,1.2(1)), SD 42.22. See (**Chakka**) **Appamāda S** (A 6.53)/3:364 f, SD 42.22.

⁵⁷ Comy seems to take “purifies” (*visujjhati*)

⁵⁸ On the 3 trainings, see (**Ti**) **Sikkhā S** (A 3.88), SD 24.10c; **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6; SD 1.11 (5).

⁵⁹ On moral courage, see (**Catukka**) **Vesārajja S** (A 4.8) + SD 51.19 (2); **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,22-28), SD 49.1 (3.6).

⁶⁰ On faith or wisdom, see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

⁶¹ See S 22.109 (SD 17.1a(2.3)); SD 52.10a (1.2.2.2-1.2.2.3).

5.3 THE PATH: MUNDANE AND SUPRAMUNDANE

5.3.1 Sainthood is not momentary. The stages of liberation or noble sainthood is clearly aligned with the elimination or weakening of the 10 fetters [4.2] as stated in such texts as **the Sikkha Sutta 1** (A 3.85).⁶² In the Abhidhamma we see the idea of the supramundane path as a momentary breakthrough. It is, of course, impossible that, for example, *streamwinning* itself is only a moment, but it is true that the *entry* into that path is but a moment.⁶³

5.3.2 The 2 levels of the path

5.3.2.1 The Commentaries, however, helpfully explains the spiritual path as the cultivation of the awakening-factors (*bodhi, pakkhiya, dhamma*) occurs in two stages or levels. The 1st stage is called **the preliminary practice** (*pubba, bhāga paṭipadā*), during which the practitioner cultivates and develops the awakening-factors for the purpose of attaining the supramundane path itself.⁶⁴

This initial stage of sainthood is preceded by the aspiration for **streamwinning** and culminates with its attaining.⁶⁵ The attaining of any of the first 3 fruitions of the path—streamwinning, once-returning and non-returning—is but a precursor, even a preparation, to attaining the next higher path.⁶⁶

In the preliminary practice, the awakening-factors are cultivated because they lead to awakening. While any of the 7 sets of awakening-factors will naturally occur *simultaneously*, they continue to strengthen themselves (the other sets) progressively until they gain full power fruiting in awakening itself.⁶⁷

5.3.2.2 When the supramundane path arises, however, all the 37 awakening-factors (that is, all the 7 sets) arise simultaneously. At this point the 37 awakening-factors no longer “lead” to awakening (their task is done); they are **awakening** itself. They constitute the various mental factors, developed to the supramundane level, marking the mental breakthrough that is awakening itself.⁶⁸

Progressively refined and strengthened, these awakening-factors converge and collectively become our experience of full freedom from suffering. In sutta terms, they each complete the process of fully understanding **the 4 noble truths** of suffering; of abandoning its cause, craving; of realizing the cessation of suffering, nirvana; and of the cultivating the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. The meaning of true reality and purpose of the spiritual life have been fulfilled.⁶⁹

6 Related texts

6.1 THE MAHĀ, JANAKA JĀTAKA (J 539) is told by the Buddha regarding his own renunciation. Realizing that his wealth would only bring trouble, he decides to renounce the world and live as an ascetic. He meets another ascetic named Nārada (Sāriputta at the time) who advises him on the hindrances to the ascetic life with these words, where lines ab are identical with those in S 30ab:

⁶² A 3.85/1:231 f (SD 3.3(2)).

⁶³ See **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142,5(10) n), SD 1.9; SD 2.3 (1.1.3(2)); (**Hatthi, gāmaka**) **Ugga S** (A 8.22,10), SD 45.15.

⁶⁴ Vism 22.39-40/679-80.

⁶⁵ See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

⁶⁶ On the 4 stages of sainthood, see SD 10.16 (11-14).

⁶⁷ On the 37 awakening-factors & the 7 sets, see SD 10.1; **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81,11), SD 6.1; SD 9 (10.3); **Sakuḷ’udāyī S** (M 77,15-21), SD 6.18.

⁶⁸ Vism 21.130-233/670, 22.9-40/679 f.

⁶⁹ On the 4 noble truths, see SD 1.1.

<i>Niddā tandī vijambhitā aratī bhatta,sammado āvasanti sarīra'tṭhā bahū hi paripanthayo'ti</i>	Sleepiness, lethargy, lazy yawning. discontent, after-meal torpor— in the body there resides many obstacles.	(J 539/6:57,23-26)
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The Jātaka Commentary give the following glosses: *niddā* = “a nap” (*kapi,niddā*, “monkey-sleep”); *tandī* = “laziness” (*ālasīyaṃ*); *aratī* = “discontent (fidgeting due to yearning)” (*ukkaṇṭhitā*); *bhatta,sammado* = “after meal fever of passion” (*bhatta,pariāho*) (JA 6:57,17 f).

6.2 THE JĀGARA SUTTA (S 1.6) is themed on sleep, too:

<i>Pañca jāgarataṃ suttā pañca suttesu jāgarā pañcabhi⁷⁰ rajam ādeti pañcabhi parisujhatīti</i>	(S 10)	Amongst the awake, 5 are asleep. Amongst the sleeping, 5 are awake. By 5 one gathers dust. By 5 one is purified.	(S 1.16,3/1:7), SD 54.2f
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The “**awake**” here refers to the arhats: they arise in the world after the Buddha, the awakened one. Unlike them, awake with wisdom and compassion, the world is still “**asleep**” in ignorance and dream of craving. We are blinded by the 5 hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, restlessness and worry, sloth and torpor, and doubt).⁷¹ We are purified of the dust of the hindrances by the 5 faculties (faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom).⁷²

6.3 OVERCOMING SLOTH AND TORPOR

6.3.1 The Saṃyutta Commentary mentions the following 6 conditions for the abandoning **sloth and torpor**, that is:

- (1) **not over-eating**. When we over-eat, especially when we take only a meal or two between dawn and noon, the energy that goes to digest that meal, leaves us weakened. Hence, moderation in food helps.
- (2) **change of posture**. Keeping to one posture, in due course, tires us. If this was the reclining posture, we are likely to be drowsy and fall asleep. However, when we mindfully switch our posture to a more comfortable one, we dispel discomfort and also slothfulness.
- (3) **the perception of light** [S 51.20/5:278]. This is one of the methods the Buddha teaches Moggallāna in **the Pacalā Sutta** (A 7.58) [6.3.2].
- (4) **dwelling in the open**. This usually refers to sleeping or meditating in a wide open space without any shelter when the weather is cool or during the night.
- (5) **spiritual friendship**. Strictly speaking, this refers to a deep mutual respect and love between a meditation teacher and his pupil, guiding and helping his practice, ensuring that he progresses well.
- (6) **suitable talk**. This is the actual instruction or answers that the meditation teacher gives his pupil, or Dhamma instruction that inspire the meditation to overcome his difficulties and to be diligent in his practice and attainment. (SA 3:166 f)

Sloth and torpor are fully destroyed in the arhat.

⁷⁰ Be *pañcabhi*; Ce Ee *pañcahi* throughout.

⁷¹ See SD 54.2f (3.1).

⁷² See SD 54.2f (3.2).

6.3.2 In the Pacalā Sutta (A 7.58), the Buddha advises Moggallāna on how to overcome sloth and torpor, thus:

“Moggallāna, mindful and fully aware, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought that on awakening, you would get up quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness’” (*na seyya, dukhaṃ na passa, sukhaṃ na middha, sukhaṃ anuyutto*).⁷³

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Niddā,ṇḍā Sutta

The Discourse on Drowsiness and Lethargy

S 1.16

1 At Savatthī.

(A deity:)

<p>2 <i>Niddā</i>⁷⁴ <i>tandī</i>⁷⁵ <i>viambhitā</i>⁷⁶ <i>aratī</i>⁷⁷ <i>bhatta, sammado</i>⁷⁸ <i>etena na-p, pakāsati</i> <i>ariya, maggo idha pāṇinan’ti</i> (S 30)</p>	<p>Sleepiness [drowsiness], lethargy, lazy yawning, discontent, after-meal torpor— because of this,⁷⁹ the noble path appears not here amongst beings.</p>	<p><i>d</i> <i>c</i></p>
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(The Blessed One:)

<p>3 <i>Niddaṃ tandiṃ viambhitaṃ</i> <i>aratiṃ bhatta, sammadaṃ</i> <i>vīriyena</i>⁸⁰ <i>naṃ paṇāmetvā</i> <i>ariya, maggo visujjhatīti</i> (S 31)</p>	<p>Sleepiness, lethargy, lazy yawning, discontent, after-meal torpor— having dispelled this by effort, the noble path is purified.</p>
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— evaṃ —

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⁷³ A 7.58/4:87 (SD 4.11).

⁷⁴ On *niddā*, see (2).

⁷⁵ On *tandī*, see (3.2).

⁷⁶ Be *viambhitā*; Ce Ee *viambhikā*; Se *vijimhitā*. See (3.3).

⁷⁷ On *aratī*, see (3.5).

⁷⁸ On *bhatta, sammada*, see (3.5).

⁷⁹ “Because of this” (*etena*) is sg. This means that the 5 aspects of the 3rd mental hindrance (sloth and torpor) can be taken either collectively or singly. The latter, however, is more appropriate to this context, since *any aspect* of this hindrance can still hinder our meditative progress. [3.1.1.2]

⁸⁰ Be *vīriyena*; Ce Ee Ke Se *viriyena*.